

Somerville Commission on Energy Use and Climate Change Meeting Minutes

February 25, 2015

Tufts Administration Building 67 Holland Ave. Somerville, MA

Attendees:

Sellers-Garcia, Oliver – (member ex-officio) Dir. Office of Sustainability and Environment
Ranger, Andrea - Commissioner
Saunders, Alyssa - Commissioner
Rooney-Varga, Juliette - Commissioner
Miller, Matthew, - Commissioner
Boukili, Vanessa - Commissioner
Basham, James - attendee
Bueno, Ramon - attendee
Crowe, Jon - attendee
Diamond, Sean - attendee
DiModica, John - attendee
Kleyman, Alexandra- attendee
Pierce, Jerrad - Attendee
Lowitz, Melissa - Attendee

The next meeting is on 3/11, Oliver Sellers-Garcia would appreciate everyone sending agenda items to post by Monday 3/9.

Somerville Zoning

The City will develop an amendment to the proposed zoning ordinance to address sustainability. Johnston requested staff from OSPCD or elsewhere to brief the Commission on sustainability in the zoning overhaul process. OSE and OSPCD are planning to start working on the amendment this calendar year.

Sellers-Garcia suggested the Commission should invite some of the planning/zoning staff to address the Commission meeting.

Perhaps create a subcommittee of the Commission to go over the zoning code changes.

Public draft of zoning overhaul can be found online at <http://www.somervillema.gov/zoning/>

Residential Energy Efficiency RFP

The City's proposal evaluation committee will meet to review responses tomorrow. Components of getting participants' data from the program – seems like we'll be able to do that. Still looking at the innovative ways to address owner-renter split incentive. Met with National Grid and still planning to meet with Eversource. National Grid is interested in directly working with NSTAR and the City. The REEP partnership will be 3 years for the vendor(s).

City hopes to have decision awarded by the next couple of weeks and under contract in 4 to 6 weeks.

Next meeting of CEUCC is in 2 weeks (March 11) and Commissioners will discuss in more depth what data is needed for REEP program.

For an upcoming meeting Ranger wants to get Brian Bowen and Russell Koty to give their presentation on Somerville REEP.

Greenhouse Gas Inventory RFP

City has developed a scope of work for the Greenhouse Gas Inventory. Was intended to go out this week but delayed due to snow storms. It will be released on Friday March 13. The City's internal committee on energy and GHG emissions includes staff from the following departments: buildings and grounds, facilities, planning and zoning, transportation and infrastructure, inspectional services, and SomerStat, in addition to OSE. Members of the committee will discuss topics such as: What are the things that the departments are interested in incorporating in order to make decisions or changes to the city buildings? How do we use the GHG inventory to inform the zoning process?

Municipal Energy Analysis - Jamie Bemis has gotten the city up and running on Mass Energy Insight. Data includes approximately 300 accounts, and only 40 have missing data. Started to observe meaningful trends for FY 2014. And the internal City GHG group is starting to look at the data. The GHG inventory scope of work does not include recommendations for improvement because that is a key component of future phases of a long-term climate change plan.

Timeframe for the work is around 3 to 4 months. Data collected is going to be FY2014. We have data that we submitted for the Green Communities on municipal city building consumption and fleet consumption. And we also have the Honeywell Guaranteed Savings data as well. Andrea suggested that we ask the consultants to develop different scenarios for reductions once we know the biggest emission sectors.

Juliette mentioned WEAVE project – visualizing municipal data and mentioned Hestia project. As part of the GHG inventory of net-zero planning, there could be a contest to visualize energy/emissions data.

Cambridge and Boston conduct periodic updates to their GHG inventories, so it would be good to compare our values with nearby cities. Other things for consultants to think about for baseline data or city comparisons is weather patterns. Multi-year datasets would give a better estimate of baseline than just 2014 data.

What about crowdsourcing energy data – like Ann Arbor got more information on renters? Possibly student project to deliver 6 months of family utility data. Eliza – there is lots of crowdsourcing software that could be used. Could data crowdsourcing be done via “green button,” which allows rate payers to share their utility data with 3rd parties?

Eliza offered to pull energy baseline data/analysis that was used for the Green Communities application in 2011.

Community Choice Aggregation

Group procurement organized by MAPC. General idea is that large groups (i.e. city-scale or larger, including all residents that don't opt-out) buy electricity in bulk, potentially allowing for lower costs and/or stipulations for higher percentages of green energy. Oliver will put Andrea in touch MAPC with Patrick Roche and Head of Energy Committee of Melrose. Andrea to send out link to CCA paper by MAPC and Tufts students.

CEUCC will establish an aggregation subcommittee. The goal is to meet with the Mayor and advise on pros/cons of aggregation.

Energy and Arts

Jen Haugh was invited to the next meeting. Her company works on the esthetics of renewable energy, and she wants to discuss the idea of art that visualizes energy/GHG, like Tidy Street.

Solar RFP

The City is targeting the release of an RFP in mid-summer once sufficient preparation work as been completed. Put together a solar task force to help with RFP – people from the commission, SCA, Mothers Out Front, could be on Task Force. JurgenWeiss suggested pulling together a conference where he could bring people who can talk about the barriers for solar – why is it adopted it in Germany more readily than the U.S.? Just general information session. Can include information on solar thermal, solar heat pumps, etc.

Matthew – there is an app called “Next Door” and it helps aggregate people together in order to buy solar PV and just do neighborly things.

The Commission would like to set target dates for its involvement and help move things along faster to set up the Task Force.

Oliver is in touch with Debra Perry of the Institute for Sustainable Communities which will run the Solar Market Pathways portion of the DOE Sun Shot Initiative. Debra is based in Medford and would like to meet with Somerville. Program will be implemented in 14 communities; some of projects have embedded in them replicability and one of the projects is Community Solar. Need a solar task force mission for task force meeting.